



LANGUAGE POLICY

The policy is annually reviewed and revised – current version October 2020

International Baccalaureate Organization (IBO) Mission Statement

“The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect. To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programs of international education and rigorous assessment. These programs encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.”

Pierce - The American College of Greece Mission Statement

The mission of Pierce is to provide a holistic education to form intellectually independent, morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens. “Non ministrari sed ministrare” (“Not to be served but to serve”) defines our institutional character and our aspiration for our students.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

Language Policy

Pierce-The American College of Greece offers an enriched education based on the best of US educational practice, along with the Greek National Curriculum. The school has also been an official school for the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme, since September 2016. Language acquisition and development are powerful and crucial parts of each and all of these educational elements.

Rationale:

At PIERCE, the rationale behind our language policy complies with the overall philosophy of our school; our school's mission is *"to provide a holistic education to form intellectually independent, morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens."*

Therefore, all language courses strive to acquaint the learner not only with linguistic elements, but also with the culture that is expressed through that language.

Students receive a bilingual education, namely in Modern Greek and in English. Students who come to PIERCE at age 12 or later already have competence in English and are typically Greek native speakers. The English program now offers four different levels (bands) for each year group. Each band addresses the needs of students of mixed abilities. Typically, by age 16, the student is functionally bilingual. The Greek language courses include both Modern and Ancient Greek in all years, but Ancient Greek is particularly emphasized in the Gymnasium with 12 to 15-year-old students. Classical Greek works of literature are also studied in Modern Greek translations.

Also in Gymnasium, a third language is compulsory. The students typically have a choice among German, Italian, French or Spanish. A third language was recently introduced in the first and second year of Lyceum, as part of the curriculum. The emphasis on languages and works in translation from around the world reflects the international perspective of the school. Profoundly American in its heritage, it is at the same time quintessentially Greek and international, and this reality is reflected in the breadth and depth of its language policy and practices.

In particular, the philosophy behind the English program, where English is taught as a second language, is that a language is more than just a means of practical communication between people; it is most importantly the bearer of the values entertained by the people speaking that language. As a result, learners are encouraged to look beyond the linguistic code and to search for values that are unique to the language they are studying or for values that their culture, too, might share with the culture under study. This way, our mission to *form [...] morally responsible, socially engaged global citizens* materializes as our learners become aware of the variety of perspectives that exist in our world.

Practice:

Apart from the Greek curriculum where learners are also exposed to the ancient Greek language and philosophy, the above aim is achieved through the daily teaching of English as a second language (5 to 7 hours weekly). Furthermore, our learners are also given the opportunity to study a third language of their choice: French, German, Italian, or Spanish (1 to 2 hours weekly).

In the IB Diploma Program, school offers Modern Greek as a “Literature” course, where the focus is directed towards developing an understanding of the techniques involved in literacy criticism and promoting the ability to form independent literacy judgements. In English as a “Language and Literature” course, the focus is directed towards developing and understanding the constructed nature of meanings generated by language and the function of context in the process. Finally, English B, as a “Language Acquisition” course, is designed for students with some previous learning of that language. The main focus of the course is on language acquisition and development of language skills, through the study and use of a range of written and spoken material.

The study of both mother tongue and English entails studying authentic, adapted or translated literature in all classes and levels. Furthermore, in an effort to teach culture experientially, a variety of events are organized by the English department, for instance, where the emphasis is on the cultural products of English-speaking cultures (e.g. Thanksgiving, Halloween, Forensics, etc.). Moreover, trips are organized with a cultural focus (e.g. trip to England with a focus on Shakespeare’s life and his works; trip to France with a focus on French cuisine; trip to Italy with a focus on the arts, etc.), while clubs centering on the third languages and the cultures they communicate are offered as part of the PIERCE curriculum. Finally, an effort is made to collaborate between language departments in such activities, as is, for example, European Languages Day.

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